LEGENDARY WARRIORS GRAPHICS

LEGENDARY NINJA of FEUDAL JAPAN

BY BENJAMIN HARPER
ILLUSTRATED BY MARY AINZA

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Summary: Silent. Deadly. Unseen. The ninja were masters of stealth, espionage, and surprise attacks. Trained in the shadows, they specialized in unarmed combat, swordplay, and secrecy. These legendary warriors carried out secret missions for powerful warlords, striking fear into their enemies with their speed and skill. This action-packed graphic novel uncovers the truth behind the real ninja of feudal Japan.

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Contents

Introduction

Shadow Warriors 4

Chapter 1

Early Training 6

Chapter 2

Weapons 14

Chapter 3

Spy Lessons 22

Chapter 4

Ninja Mission 32

More About the Ninja! 44
Glossary 46
Internet Sites 47
About the Author 48
About the Illustrator 48

INTRODUCTION SHADOW WARRIORS

They could hide in plain sight.

They could move with no sound.

They could climb and jump with ease.

And they trained their whole lives to be **invisible** fighters.

CHAPTER 1 EARLY TRAINING

Iga Province, Japan

Genji, you are old enough to know . . .

Our village is not what it seems. We are ninja.

Ninja?

We train as spies.

We work in secret and pass down our skills.

And now . . .

We have been ninja for hundreds of years.

Who do we spy for?

Whoever pays us!

Ninja were often hired by Japanese rulers, known as daimyo.

The time has come for you to begin your training.

To become a ninja?

Yes.

Ninja training began at a young age, and students had to master many skills.

Will I learn to use weapons?

Yes, young one . . .

But first, you must train in other ways.

You must build strength.

And you must learn balance.

Why do we train?

We go on **missions** for important people.

The missions are dangerous!

SPLASH

Again!

Feel your feet on the **bamboo.** **Concentrate.**

Very good, young one.

Ninja must train to be strong and steady.

You must be able to pull yourself up!

And you must be able to jump . . .

Oof!

. . . very long distances!

Training is hard work.

Yes, and you must master these skills. Then, you can move on to other things.

CHAPTER 2 WEAPONS

Using weapons was an important part of ninja training.

We use weapons called throwing stars.

These weapons were used in battle . . .

Focus on the circle.

. . . or to surprise an enemy from a distance.

SWOOSH!

Now, throw the weapon at the target!

shk

You are learning quickly.

You can bury the stars with a point up to slow people down!

Ouch!

There are more weapons to learn, young one . . .

This is a staff.

The staff is one of a ninja's most important weapons.

The staff keeps your enemy at a distance and **protects** you.

CLACK!

The staff keeps you safe!

Ungh!

CLACK!

It can also help a ninja find the depth of a river or lake.

And allow you to find traps!

A ninja must always carry a sword.

You may encounter **samurai.**

You will need to **defend** yourself!

You wear your sword on your back.

FWOOSH!

Ninja try to stay hidden.

But we must be able to fight any enemy if we have to!

And I can block any attack--fast!

You may need to run if you are discovered.

These are spikes. You carry them with you.

Throw them on the ground to slow down an enemy!

POOF!

And if you need to hide quickly, drop a smoke bomb.

Now I am ready to learn how to be a spy!

CHAPTER 3 SPY LESSONS

Ninja learn to use nature as a tool.

Climb the tree.

And now we wait.

How long do we stay here?

We are practicing stillness.

On some missions, you may need to sit still and silent for hours.

You did well. You were still and invisible.

Another way to spy unseen is in the water.

Blend in by hiding behind the water plants.

If you hear people coming, go underwater.

No one will be able to see me!

That is right. Try it now.

Look around you.

Do you see any ninja?

I don't see any ninja!

Guess again. Anyone here could be a ninja!

When we are on long missions, we wear **disguises.**

We blend in wherever we go.

It's easy to blend in.

None of this is easy, young one.

Put these claws on your hands and feet.

Castles are built of stone walls.

Umpf!

You must be able to climb them.

Now grab the hook!

Throw the hook onto the tree and swing down.

SWOOSH!

Very good! Now, your most important lesson . . .

Above all, ninja must be silent.

These will help?

Yes, but you must practice.

CRUNCH!

Again!

Slowly . . .

Excellent. You are silent.

And now . . .

CHAPTER 4 NINJA MISSION

You are ready for your first mission.

We are heading to the castle.

You did well.
You were calm.

paRUM
paRUM
paRUM
paRUM
Very good. You were invisible.

Master, what is our mission?

We must get a scroll.

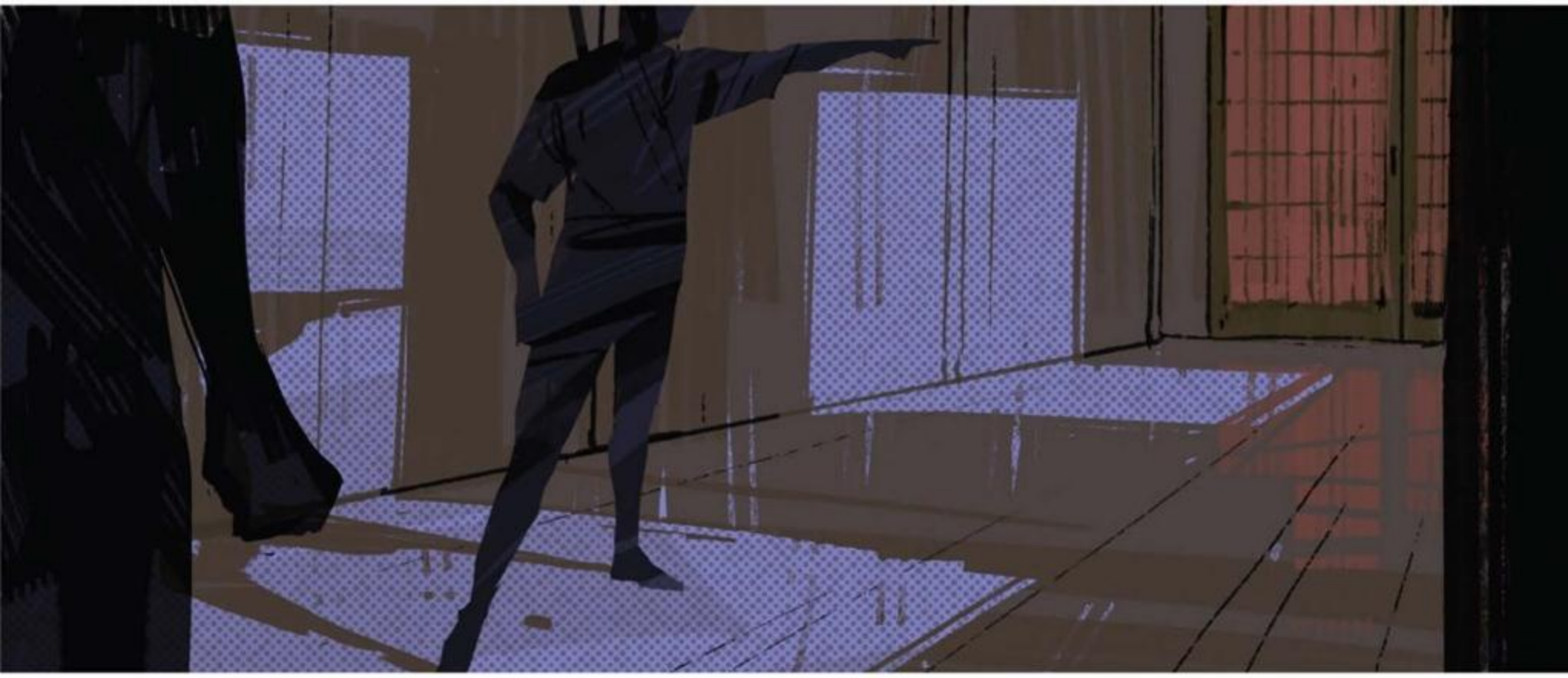
It contains important battle plans.

And THAT is where we are going!

Samurai!

We can sneak in.
There are trees.

Very good!



POOF!

Your first mission was a success.

You are a ninja!

We did it!

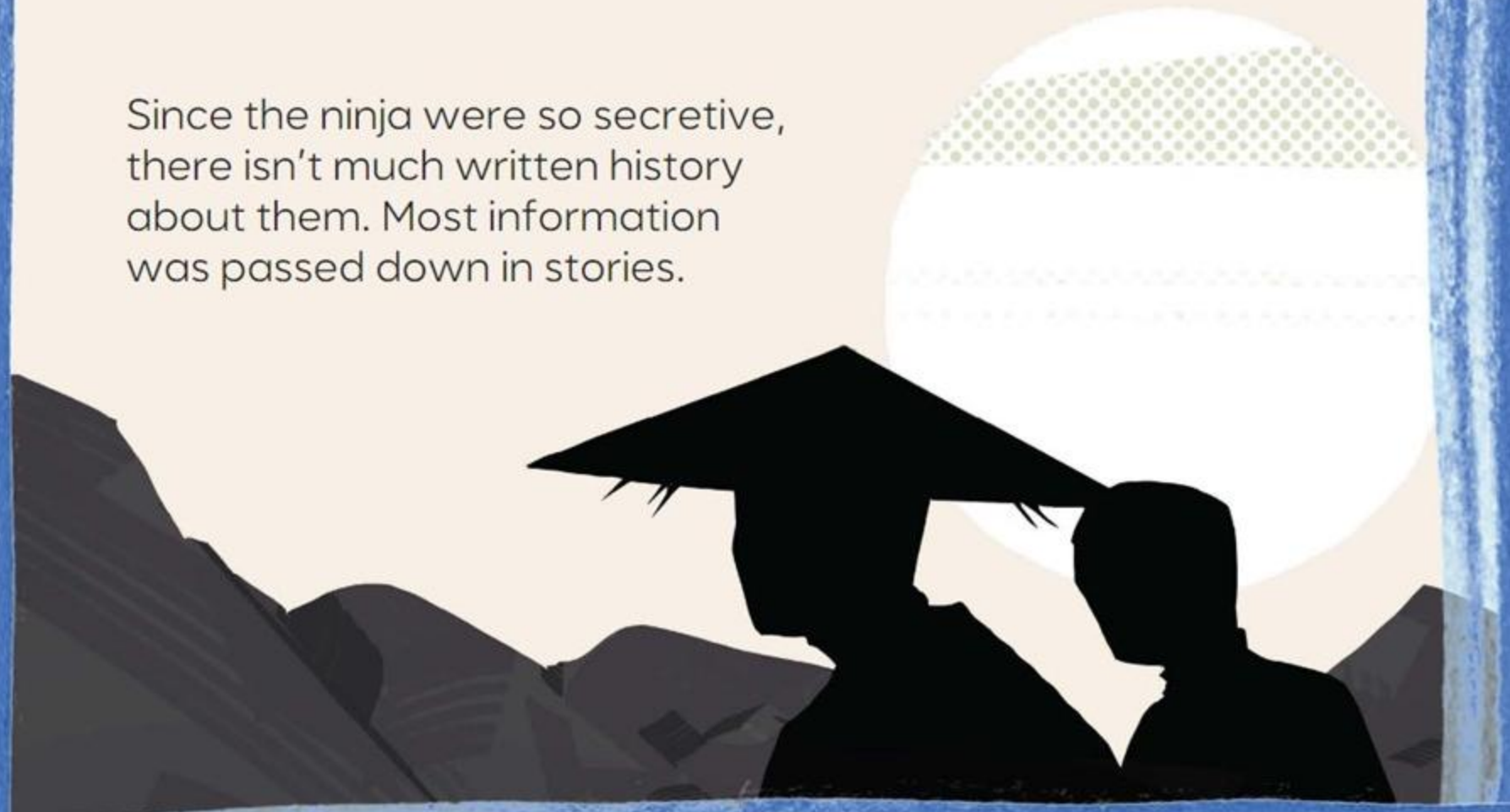
More About the NINJA!

The Japanese word *ninja* translates to "one who is invisible."

There were two main ninja clans: the Iga and Koga. They lived in mountain villages and were farmers—when they weren't on missions!

Ninja are very popular in modern culture. They are in movies, television shows, video games, and more. There are still schools that teach how to be a ninja!

Since the ninja were so secretive, there isn't much written history about them. Most information was passed down in stories.



Glossary

ancient (AYN-shunt)— having existed many years ago

bamboo (bam-BOO)— a variety of tropical woody grasses, including some with strong hollow stems used for building, furniture, or utensils

concentrate (KAHN-suhn-trayt)— to focus one's powers, efforts, or attention on one thing

defend (dih-FEND)— to repel danger or attack

disguise (dihs-GYZ)— to change one's dress or looks so as to conceal identity

invisible (in-VIZ-uh-buhl)— impossible to see

mission (MISH-uhn)— a task or job that is assigned

protect (pruh-TEKT)— to cover or shield from something that would destroy or injure

samurai (SAM-uh-ry)— a warrior serving a Japanese ruler and practicing a code of conduct which valued honor over life

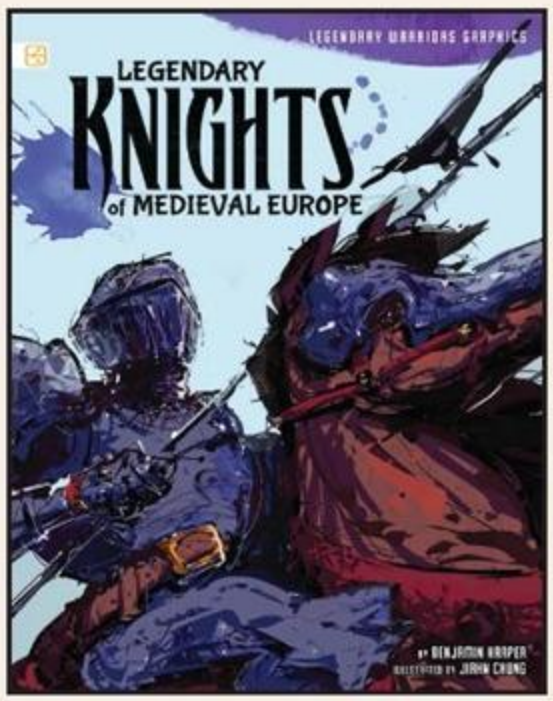
Internet Sites

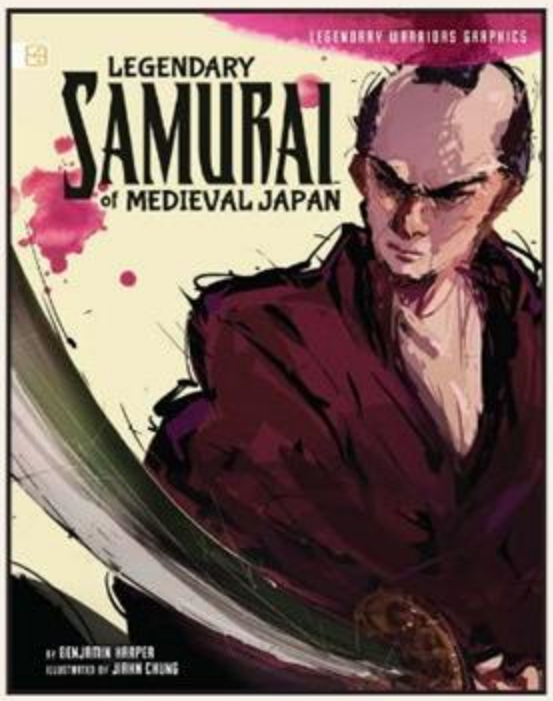
History.com: Ninjas: How Japanese Spies Evolved into Pop Culture Heroes
history.com/news/ninja-history-shinobi-feudal-japan

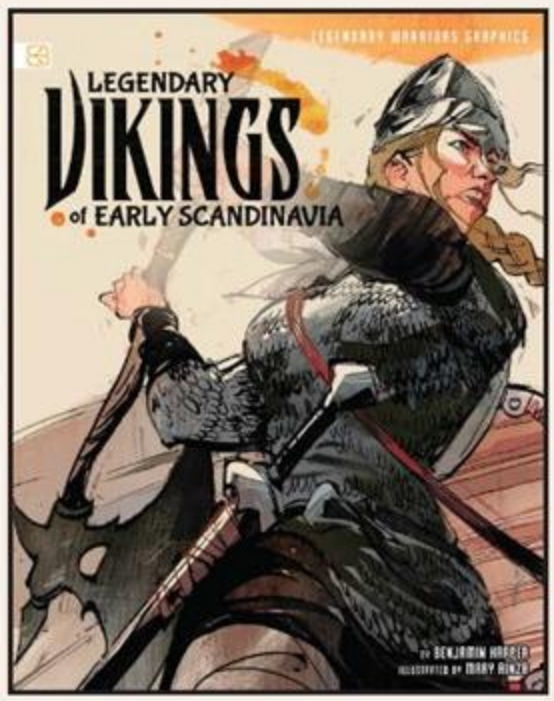
Japan National Tourism Organization: Exploring the Birthplace of the Real Ninja
japan.travel/japan-heritage/popular/iga-koka-birthplace-ninja-shi-ga-mie-sengoku-period-shuriken

PBS: Rogue History: The Misunderstood Legacy of Ninjas
pbs.org/video/the-misunderstood-legacy-of-ninjas-yx8wjx

Read About More Legendary Warriors!







About the Author

Benjamin Harper lives in Pasadena, California, where he edits superhero books for a living. When he's not at work, he writes; watches monster movies; and hangs out with his cats, Marjorie and Jerry, and a tank full of rough-skinned newts. He tends a bog garden full of carnivorous plants and also grows milkweed to help save Monarch butterflies. His other books include the Bug Girl series, *Obsessed with Star Wars*, *Rolling with BB-8!*, *Hansel & Gretel & Zombies*, and many more.

About the Illustrator

Mary Ainza was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She is an illustrator with a passion for bringing stories to life through art. Mary began her journey in Illustration at California State University Long Beach and continued at the Art Center College of Design. She works as a freelance artist, creating captivating book covers, film posters, graphic novels, comics, and various projects in the illustration field.

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Discover the real-life history of these legendary warriors in this action-packed graphic novel.

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